

ruinous to the best interests of the people, and particularly of this Commonwealth. It reduces to such an extent the duties on imported cotton and woollen goods, that the domestic manufacture of these articles could not be sustained. These manufactures, which have grown up under the assurance of protection from the Government, now employ many millions of capital, and several hundred thousand persons. In this Commonwealth, the amount of capital invested in these two branches of manufacture only—though it cannot be calculated with much exactness, is probably not less than thirty or forty million dollars. A great part of this capital, and with it the fortune of the citizens to whom it belongs or gives employment, would be destroyed forever by the passage of this bill. The effect of the passage of the bill on the growth of wool, and on the manufacture of iron and sugar would be not less injurious. It would, in short prostrate at a blow, all the principal branches of domestic manufacturing industry.

The fatal effect of such a measure upon the public welfare, hardly needs to be specified. The importance of domestic manufactures, as a home market for the products of agriculture, as a security for the National Independence, as a means of increasing the wealth and population, extending the comforts, and elevating the civilization of the community, is universally admitted. The most enlightened nations have always been ready to make great sacrifices for the sake of naturalizing, within their own limits, these valuable establishments. Our own Government has, for fifty years, uniformly, preservingly and successfully, pursued the same policy. The small tax which it has imposed upon us, in the increased price of some articles, has been repaid in a thousand different shapes, in the augmented prosperity of the country. After we have thus, for half a century, fostered our domestic manufactures with increasing care, until we have finally brought them to their present flourishing condition, is it politic, patriotic, consistent, to turn upon them suddenly, and by a single wanton act of power, crush them all at a blow? Would not an act of this kind appear to be dictated rather by wild caprice than by the sober and prudent calculation which ought to prevail in the councils of a great people.

It is obvious that such a proceeding could only be justified by some very strong and urgent motive. In the present instance none whatever can be found. The pretext alleged by South Carolina for desiring the repeal of the pro-